

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

ABRAMS DOCTRINE: HAS IT BEEN ABUSED IN THE GWOT?

by

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This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

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Report Documentation Page			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 03 MAY 2004		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED -	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Abrams Doctrine: Has It Been Abused in the GWOT?				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) George Brinegar				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5050				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT See attached file.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 34	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: COL George A. Brinegar

TITLE: Abrams Doctrine: Has It Been Abused In The GWOT?

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 27 February 2004 PAGES: 34 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

In the final days of the Vietnam War, General Abrams (Chief of Staff of the Army 1972-1974) initiated a strategy whereby the U.S. Army would never go to war again without substantial mobilization of the Army Reserve Component. This strategy has become widely accepted as the Abrams Doctrine. Now the United States finds itself in another potentially long war, the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Since September 11, 2001, the United States has executed a "partial mobilization" of Soldiers from the Army Reserve Component in order to meet the demands of this War. In the third year of the GWOT, has the Abrams Doctrine been abused to the extent that too many Army Reserve Component Soldiers have been mobilized? This research paper examined the genesis of the Abrams Doctrine, analyzed current mobilization trends of the Army Guard and Army Reserve, and described the effects of this current "partial mobilization" on employers, families, recruiting, and retention. Finally, recommendations were made for the future.

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ABRAMS DOCTRINE: HAS IT BEEN ABUSED IN THE GWOT?

We have all seen the world change, and change with an intensity and rapidity that an earlier generation might not have believed. This change has brought us challenges and opportunities. As a Nation, we must grasp these challenges and seize these opportunities.¹

—GENERAL ABRAMS, CSA, 1974

This statement was not made in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, but in the turmoil of the last days of the Vietnam War. These words were spoken by General Creighton Abrams (Chief of Staff of the Army 1972-1974) as he delivered “The Posture of the Army Statement” before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives. However, these words seem equally appropriate in the midst of the Global War on Terror and instability of the Twenty-First Century. General Abrams clearly understood the critical mistake of his war, but, more importantly, he had a clear vision for victory in future wars.

In the final days of the Vietnam War, General Abrams initiated a strategy whereby the U.S. Army would never go to war again without substantial mobilization of the Army Reserve Component. This strategy has become widely accepted as the Abrams Doctrine. Now the United States finds itself in another potentially long war, the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Since September 11, 2001, the United States has executed a “partial mobilization” of Soldiers from the Army Reserve Component in order to meet the demands of this War. In the third year of the GWOT, has the Abrams Doctrine been abused to the extent that too many Army Reserve Component Soldiers have been mobilized? This research paper examined the genesis of the Abrams Doctrine, analyzed current mobilization trends of the Army Guard and Army Reserve, and described the effects of this current “partial mobilization” on employers, families, recruiting, and retention. Finally, recommendations were made for the future.

THE DIFFICULT YEARS PRECEEDING THE ABRAMS DOCTRINE: 1960S

Lyndon Johnson astounded the Defense Establishment with his refusal to call up the Reserves...²

—LEWIS SORLEY, Defense Policy Analyst, 1991

In order to understand the rationale for the Abrams Doctrine, take a step back into the 1960s and the early years of the United States intervention in the Vietnam War, where decisions were made that arguably “set the course” for failure. In 1965, “Lyndon Johnson astounded the Defense Establishment by his refusal to call up the Reserves to support expansion of the war in Vietnam, perhaps the most fateful decision of the entire conflict. Johnson’s refusal was

apparently motivated in part by reluctance to spread the effects of the war through the population---certainly many more families and virtually every town and city would be affected by a call-up of any proportion, with a much different class cross-section and much greater political impact than draft calls affecting only those who could not engineer a deferment.”³

The second-and third-order effects of the President’s series of refusals not to utilize the Reserves in this war were disastrous. First, as the Army was trying valiantly to expand in order to meet the demands of the war, the “pool” of Reserve Leadership and Soldiers were “off limits.” To fill this void, Active Duty Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) were prematurely promoted. With no Reserve mobilizations, these same young NCOs and Officers could expect numerous rotations to a combat zone. Second, the Reserve Component (RC) soon became demoralized and bitter, taking years to restore RC morale. Devoted Reservists and Guardsman who for years had trained for mobilization were told to stay home with absolutely no hope of ever becoming a part of the Army Team. Further, to make a bad situation almost impossible, the Guard and Reserve quietly began to watch much of their equipment go out the back door of the armory for cross-leveling to satisfy the demand of an Active Army trying to prosecute a war without disturbing the American Public.⁴ There is no doubt that the entire Army was drastically impacted by the decision not to mobilize the RC.

Arguably, the most disastrous effect of not mobilizing the Reserves was the perception that nobody cared in “Hometown America.” Lewis Sorely, a writer and defense policy analyst for the last three decades, clearly articulated the problem: “Lyndon Johnson’s policy of trying to fight the war on the cheap, on the sly almost, and without involving the larger community [RC], meant that the general populace had no stake in it, and hence no motivation to ensure that the sacrifices of those who did serve were in some way validated by the eventual outcome.”⁵

THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF AN ARMY IN CRISIS: GENERAL ABRAMS, 1972-1974

The Nation and its well-being must be kept foremost, and must not be hazarded by purely parochial concerns.⁶

—GENERAL ABRAMS, CSA, 1974

On October 12, 1972, General Creighton W. Abrams became the twenty-sixth Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army (CSA). An officer who had seen combat in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam was now the point man for an Army in crisis. Abrams clearly knew his Army was in deep trouble. General Frank Mildren, who had been a division, corps, and land forces commander, provided a clear glimpse of this period and the Army: “The image of the Army was at an all time low. The public had no confidence in the Army. They blamed the Army for all our ills... The

morale was probably lower than it has been for many years in the Active Army.”⁷ This situation was no surprise to the new CSA. He had commanded at all levels from troop to corps and was no stranger to the Washington bureaucracy, having served in numerous Army Staff positions. Additionally, to his credit, he knew the Reserve of the Army, having served as the Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff for the Reserve Component in the late 1950s. Now his new position as CSA would require superb leadership for an Army in the “final death throes” of an ugly experience called the Vietnam War.

To clearly understand Creighton Abrams, one must look beyond his illustrious military record. This researcher believes it was his keen insight into the American People, in combination with his superior military skills and understanding of force structure, that led to his strong belief in the utilization of the RC. Several situations provide a glimpse to see inside the man, and one of these was his action prior to assuming the duties as CSA while awaiting Senate confirmation. According to Major General D.C. Smith, Deputy Chief of Staff, for Information-Army Staff, Abrams and his family went on a vacation to “drive the country”. Abrams delighted in the conversations with all who would talk to him, from gas station workers to shop attendants. He had a great faith and respect for the common people of American society. He sincerely believed the Army was a part of that society. During this trip, he validated in his own mind the essential strength of this country and the common sense and wisdom of the average American.⁸ Abrams understood both the importance and strength of the “will” of the American public. This researcher believes this would quietly, but consciously, play an important role in the thoughts of Abrams in regard to mobilizing the Reserve of the Army during time of crisis.

THE INTENT AND EMERGENCE OF THE ABRAMS DOCTRINE: THE 1970S

They're not taking us to war again without calling up the reserves.⁹

—GENERAL ABRAMS, as heard by GENERAL VESSEY

General Abrams had survived the most difficult years and was now in a position to directly impact future strategy. Lieutenant General Donn Starry, Abrams' contemporary, provided an insight into Abrams, the strategic leader, during an interview for the U.S. Army Oral History Program. He explained that although Abrams was not a political scientist, he was a Soldier and a realistic leader who uniquely understood the Army's mission and the military's relation to the Country.¹⁰ In 1972, Abrams brought a new and refreshing perspective as the CSA. This was easily enhanced by his in-depth knowledge of both the Army's Active and Reserve

Components. He quietly began to build a strategy for the Total Army (Army, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard).

His strategy for the future Total Army relied heavily on the entire Army (Active and Reserve). In fact, he boldly made the following assertion during his "Posture of the Army Statement" in 1974 as he testified before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives: "We consider the Total Force structure, both Active and Reserve Components, in developing requirements for initial reinforcement and for mobilization. Obviously, we rely heavily on Reserve Component Forces. We can make no plans to fight in a major conflict without considering their early mobilization and commitment."¹¹ Thus, the Abrams Doctrine that provides for intense utilization of the Reserve of the Army was born.

General Abrams methodology, this researcher believes, was twofold. First, his increased reliance on the Reserve could quickly increase the Army's strength. Abrams was committed to increasing the Army from a thirteen-division structure to a sixteen-division structure while maintaining 785,000 Active Duty endstrength. Utilization of their Reserve allowed the Army to reach this goal.¹² Second, reliance on the Reserves also enabled Abrams to capitalize on an intangible Clausewitzian factor, the "will" of the American People, which he uniquely understood. General John Vessey, who would later become the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, remarked about Abrams' feeling toward the American People: "He thought about that [appreciation for the kind of a nation America was] an awful lot, and concluded that whatever we're going to do we ought to do right as we are a Nation. Let's not build an Army off here in the corner someplace. The Armed Forces are an expression of the Nation. If you take them out of the national context, you are likely to screw them up. That was his lesson from Vietnam. He wasn't going to leave them in that position ever again. And part and parcel of that was that you couldn't go to war without calling up the Reserves."¹³

Thus, in August of 1974, General Abrams signed a memorandum to the Army Leadership providing his direct guidance: "We [with the full support of the Secretary of Defense] are committed firmly to the essential task of bolstering the readiness and responsiveness of the Reserve Components, integrating them fully into the Total Force."¹⁴ As a result, the Abrams Doctrine was established. Maximum utilization of the Reserve of the Army would be deeply entrenched in the strategy for the Army's future fight. Today, there is no doubt that the Army relies heavily on the expertise, leadership, and sheer numbers of soldiers from the Reserves.

APPLICATION OF THE ABRAMS DOCTRINE: MOBILIZATION OF THE US ARMY RESERVE COMPONENT SINCE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Today [March 19, 2003], we are in the midst of one of the longest periods of mobilization in our history...As we prepare to give the Nation more options in the GWOT, additional Guardsmen and Reservists are being mobilized.¹⁵

—Thomas Hall, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, 2003

It is now almost thirty years since General Abrams was the CSA, yet the Abrams Doctrine continues to live in the U.S. military strategy. In fact, in 2003, the United States was again involved in another possibly long and costly war. However, the lessons and hardships of the Vietnam War are still vividly clear for the Department of Defense and particularly, the Army. One of the lessons learned, maximum utilization of the Reserve, is deeply entrenched in U.S. military strategy. In the GWOT, the application of the Abrams Doctrine, with regard to the “partial mobilization” of the Reserve, has continued at a feverish pace since September 11, 2001. In fact, using the authority of Title 10 U.S. Code, Section 12302, “Partial Mobilization,” the President can activate up to one million Soldiers from the Reserves (all Services) for up to two years. Executive Order 13223 was issued on September 14, 2001, authorizing “partial mobilization,” in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11th. This Executive Order remains in effect today.

The third year into the GWOT, however, has the United States overly relied on the Abrams Doctrine, specifically within the Army? Has the United States mobilized so much of the Reserve of the Army that recruiting and retention will be negatively impacted for years to come? What are the effects on civilian employers and the Reserve Component families? These critical questions will be answered in the paragraphs to follow in order to determine if the United States has, in fact, abused the Abrams Doctrine in the GWOT.

THE CURRENT PACE AND TREND OF MOBILIZATION:

America's part-time troops will shoulder a much larger share of the front-line burden in Iraq next year [2004] than they do now, according to a troop-rotation plan announced Thursday [November 6, 2003] by the Pentagon.¹⁶

—Dave Moniz, Journalist, 2003

Very limited mobilization occurred during the Vietnam War. In fact, only about 5,000 Soldiers (42 units) were activated from the Army Reserve. Executive Order 11406 likewise federalized up to 24,500 (12,234 actually activated) in the Army Guard for the entire war. Even though the 1967 Army Reserve endstrength was 261,000 and 418,000 for the Army Guard, the

vast majority of this large manpower pool was never mobilized for combat in Vietnam. In order to put this in context for today, Figure 1 depicts the current breakdown of the Total Army.

Fiscal Year 2003- Total Army

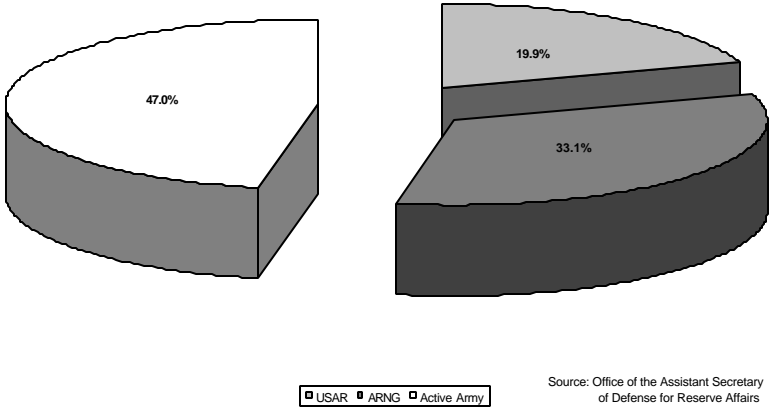


FIGURE 1.

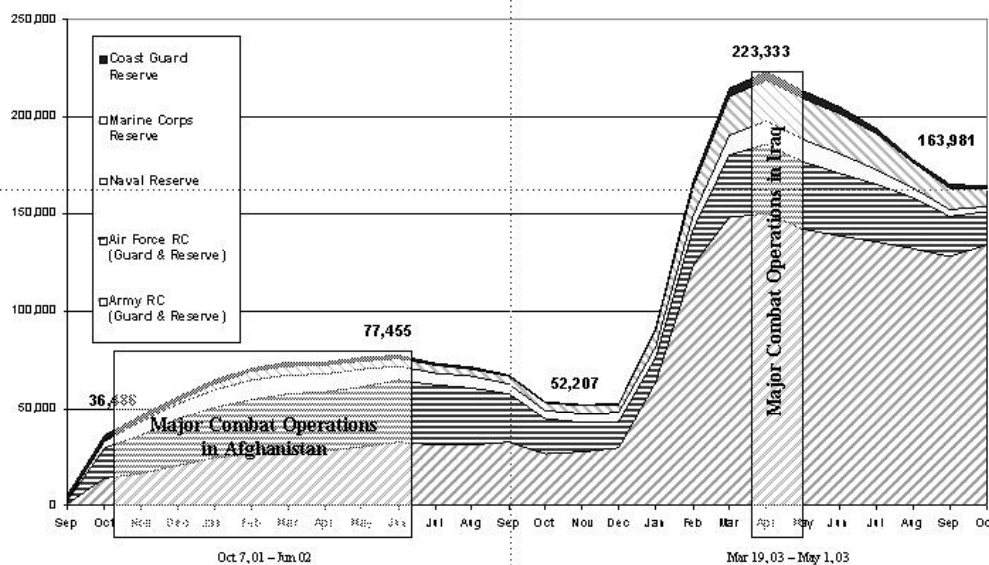
The number of Army Reserve Component Soldiers mobilized for the Vietnam War pales in comparison to the current mobilization pace for the GWOT. This can be seen easily in the sheer numbers as reported by Department of Defense (DoD). Since “Partial Mobilization Authority” was granted on September 14, 2001, as of February 9, 2004, DoD has mobilized for Active Duty over 238,000 Army Reserve Component Soldiers.¹⁷ Some critics claim that a large number of these Soldiers have been mobilized multiple times, a claim widely believed. As of February 2004, this was simply not true. In fact, less than three percent of the Army Reserve Component Soldiers mobilized have been mobilized multiple times in the GWOT.¹⁸ Table 1 depicts the number of soldiers mobilized and the number of soldiers mobilized multiple times. In dramatic contrast to the nine years of the Vietnam War, DoD has activated over ten times the number of Army Reserve Component Soldiers in just over two years for the GWOT.

	ARNG	USAR	Total
Mobilized as of Feb 04	141,765	96,790	238,555
Multiple Activations	4,465	1,850	6,315
Soldiers Mobilized Since Sep. 14, 2001. Source: Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs.			

TABLE 1.

The significant trend of utilization of the RC since September 2001 is depicted in Figure 2. Heavy reliance on the Reserve Component in the GWOT is quite apparent. This reliance was highlighted in reference to just one of the battlefields of GWOT, Iraq, in November 2003 by the Pentagon's Chief Spokesman Lawrence DiRita. He explained that by spring 2004, Reservists will represent thirty-seven percent of the Total Force in Iraq compared to twenty-two percent in November 2003. This equates to 39,000 Reserve Soldiers, many of whom serve in the three Army National Guard Combat Brigades that will be on duty in Iraq by spring 2004.¹⁹ Simply stated, the Reserve of the Army has been and will continue to be a key player in the GWOT.

Reserve Component Members Mobilized



Source: Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs

FIGURE 2.

MOBILIZATION AND THE EFFECT ON THE EMPLOYER:

It's a dilemma, by the way, that we've faced since the founding of our Country. When the winds of war were stirring in 1776, John Adams, a lawyer in Boston wrote to a minister in Boston, 'we must all be soldiers now'.²⁰

—Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense, 2002

The effects of mobilization on Reserve Soldiers' employers must be closely monitored if the United States plans to maintain a strong and flexible Reserve Force. The Reserve Component Soldier is quite unique in the world today. America's RC system requires traditional training of one weekend per month and fifteen consecutive days of training per year. Reserve Soldiers rely on their civilian occupation for the remaining 326 days a year. That is, the Army is not the Reserve Soldier's primary source of income. Of course, with every mobilization, Soldiers demobilize and return to civilian jobs. Thus, in general terms, satisfaction of the employer weighs heavily on the mind of the Reservist.

As the nation pursues of the GWOT and the Army's execution of the Abrams Doctrine, what is the employer's prospective? Consider two sets of data: first, clearly the most comprehensive study is the "Reserve Employer Survey," a study conducted by DoD between 1999 and 2000. Although the survey was conducted prior to the GWOT, most would agree that this survey provides the greatest amount of insight into the Twenty-First Century Reserve Soldier/employer relationship. The second source of data is the "Status of Force Surveys" initially conducted in May 2003. The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness directed these surveys (conducted three times per year) to gather information with regard to current and critical issues. Both sources provide DoD and the Army Leadership with critical information so that mobilization decisions are not based on generalizations or widespread misconceptions.

The "Reserve Employer Survey" was based on interviews conducted with 2,037 large and small employers nationwide. Employers used in the survey were selected from two sources, a representative list of U.S. employers and a list of employers provided by the DoD's seven Military Reserve Components.²¹ The survey yielded the following findings:

- 93% of employers expressed favorable attitude toward RC Service.
- 96% of employers were satisfied with their reservist-employee.
- 92% of employers have flexible policies to accommodate absences.²²

However, tougher issues arise with long-term Reservists' absences from the workplace.

Consider these findings:

- A majority of employers indicated that absence due to military obligations were too long.
- Nearly 50% felt that absences over 14 days caused problems [in the workplace].
- 80% of employers were affected by absence of more than 30 days.
- Impact greater on smaller businesses; the most serious effect was increased workload on co-workers.
- More than 1/3 felt that increased reliance on the RC will cause problems in the workplace in the future.²³

As the Army continues to exercise the Abrams Doctrine, it cannot afford to neglect the interests of Reservists' employer. It is no surprise that this survey provided these simple but critically important requests from employers to lessen problems in the workplace. The top three employers' requests were:

- (1) Receive copies of Reservist's orders.
- (2) Receive official notification from the military service.
- (3) Receive longer notification times (with rationale for deployment and likely duration, which provides improved workload planning for employers, possible lower costs and decreased resentment).²⁴

"Status of Force Surveys" are designed as concise, web-based questionnaires to gather critical information regarding current issues (health care, employer support, activation process, intent to reenlist, etc.). These surveys, integral to DoDs Human Resources Strategic Plan, are intended to be used to improve both policy and practice. This random internet survey in May 2003 elicited over 25,000 responses. Nearly half of those responding were Reserve Soldiers (all Services) activated within the previous twenty-four months.²⁵ Their responses to the survey questions below provided tremendous insight. The numbers in the parentheses indicate the percentage of Army National Guard (ARNG) or US Army Reserve (USAR) Soldiers responding in the respective category.

Q.10.f. In your opinion, how does your civilian supervisor view your participation in the National Guard/Reserve?

Very Favorable-Somewhat Favorable: (56%ARNG)/(58%USAR)
Somewhat Unfavorably-Very Unfavorably: (10%ARNG)/(12%USAR)

Q.159.a. For your most recent activation, how much of a problem was employer support at the beginning of the activation for you or your family?

Not a Problem-Slight Problem: (79%ARNG)/(76%USAR)
Serious-Very Serious Problem: (7%ARNG)/(9%USAR)

Q.159.b. For your most recent activation, how much of a problem was getting the same job back after returning for you or your family?
 Not a Problem-Slight Problem: (86%ARNG)/(84%USAR)
 Serious-Very Serious Problem: (8% ARNG)/(8%USAR)

Q.159.d. For your most recent activation, how much of a problem was loss of civilian job after returning for you or your family?
 Not a Problem-Slight Problem: (91%ARNG)/(92%USAR)
 Serious-Very Serious Problem: (6%ARNG)/(4%USAR) ²⁶

Both of these sources of data do not express a significant problem in the Reservist/employer relationship. This survey also showed that this relationship is extremely delicate. Employers must be considered in the current and future execution of the Abrams Doctrine because Reservists' morale and livelihood depend on this sensitive relationship. As shown in the data, many of the challenges faced by these employers and their Reservists' employees can be mitigated with efficiently organized and executed mobilizations. DoD and the Army must minimize the sacrifices made by Reservists' employers through efficient communication and predictability (i.e.-military orders, expected time-line, etc.).

Even though "only 6% of all businesses in the United States employ Reservists," ²⁷ this relationship between employer and employee is critical to the ability to execute the Abrams Doctrine and continue to prosecute the current GWOT. As indicated by the data, the Abrams Doctrine has not been abused according to the employers of the Army Reserve Force. However, DoD and the Army Leadership must dedicate themselves to forming and nurturing a strong Total Army/Employer Team. If credibility is lost by either member of this team, successful execution of the mobilization process will become problematic. More importantly, the Army's ability to prosecute the GWOT will be jeopardized.

MOBILIZATION AND THE EFFECT ON THE RESERVE COMPONENT FAMILY

We cannot continue to rely on our Reservists who now comprise approximately half our force [all Services], if their families are not ready for the stresses and strains of separations and long deployments. ²⁸

—COL Scott II, Director of Family Policy OASD-RA, 2003

The execution of the Abrams Doctrine directly affects Reserve Component families. Of course, the execution of the "partial mobilization" in the GWOT has directly impacted the lives of thousands of Guard and Reserve spouses and children. In order to determine if DoD has gone too far in the magnitude of current mobilization, this researcher used the most current and comprehensive spouse assessment, the "2002 Survey of Spouses of Activated National Guard

and Reserve Component Members,” commissioned by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs (OASD-RA).²⁹

This survey, awarded to Caliber Associates, was conducted from August through November 2002 via a mailed survey instrument. A total of 4,002 spouses, whose Service members had been activated for either scheduled or unscheduled mobilization periods, responded to the survey. All mobilizations came after September 11, 2001. Listed below is a summary of the key issues identified by this survey.

- Although [family] support is strong for many units, all families are not being reached.
- Loss of income can be a factor during mobilization, but not all families suffer financial hardship. In fact, many families make more money during mobilization.
- Some “high risk” families are more likely to need support, but may be the least likely to seek support. These families are newly married, with young children, and often isolated.
- Strong [family] programs at the unit level are most effective.³⁰

Close scrutiny of these issues leads to three observations that indirectly effect the successful execution of mobilization: First, many families have seen an increase in income with mobilization (55% of families in Army Reserve received an increase; 65% of Army Guard families received an increase). As a result, the generalization that all mobilizations are a detriment to family income is simply not true. Second, “high risk” Soldiers/families exist and their identification prior to mobilization is critical. The Soldier must be assisted in overcoming the challenge and avoid discharge due to an inability to mobilize and deploy. Third, despite widespread media comments, many Reserve Component families are “working through” the challenges of mobilization and doing well. In fact, survey wide, 61% of the spouses said they were either coping well or very well. Again, another widespread generalization is simply not true, that is, not all families suffer tremendous and highly significant trauma with the mobilization of a loved one in their immediate family.³¹

If the Army continues to rely on the Abrams Doctrine, it must in turn be committed to building the readiness of families, at the unit level, in the Army Reserve Component. The data cited in this survey indicated there were many dedicated and devoted families coping with both scheduled and unscheduled mobilizations in a commendable manner. Although there were challenges in RC family readiness, the data from this survey do not support the generalization that current mobilizations have collectively abused the Army Reserve Component Family.

MOBILIZATION AND THE EFFECT ON RECRUITING AND RETENTION

The National Guard sees no indication that the homeland security mission or the War On Terrorism is having any serious impact on recruiting.³²

—LTG BLUM, Chief NGB, 2003

In order to address the impact on recruiting and retention in the midst of a “partial mobilization,” this researcher utilized the most current data available: fiscal year-end data for 2003. Both the Army Guard and the Army Reserve met endstrength for 2003, staying below the attrition ceiling, as depicted in Table 2 below. In fact, the Army Guard has met endstrength requirements for the past seven consecutive years.

Army Reserve Component, Fiscal Year 2003						
Component	Authorized	Actual	Number +/-	% Authorized	Attr Rate Ceiling	Actual Attrition Rate
ARNG	350,000	351,091	1,091	100.30%	18.00%	17.20%
USAR	205,000	211,890	6,890	103.40%	28.60%	20.60%

Source: Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs.

TABLE 2.

Endstrength is critical, but attrition may be just as important. Figure 3 depicts the recent attrition history (FY93-FY03) for both the Army Guard and Army Reserve. Figure 3 indicates Army Guard attrition negatively increased in 2001 and 2002, with positive and significant decreases in 2003. Army Reserve attrition has been on a consistent and positive decline since 2001 and that trend continues through 2003.

Initial indications reveal that the Army has not abused the Abrams Doctrine to the extent of reaching a “point of diminishing return” in regard to RC recruiting and retention. However, this positive news must not be allowed to encourage complacency. There are several underlying issues that must be considered. First, how many Soldiers are staying in the RC “willingly” as opposed to those retained through “stop loss” orders? The Army RC “stop loss” policy is much different than that used by the Active Army. The Assistant Secretary of the Army

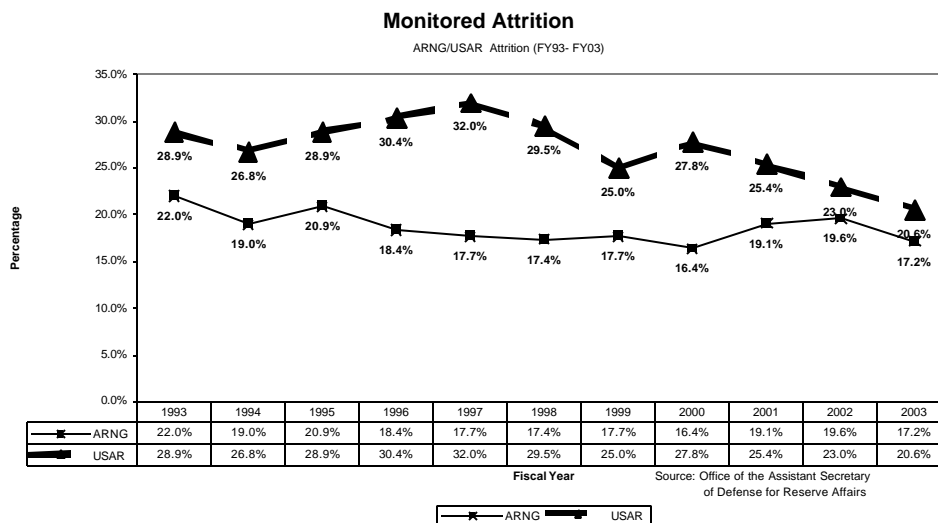


FIGURE 3.

(Manpower/Reserve Affairs) approved Army RC “stop loss” to become effective when the unit is alerted; the policy applies throughout mobilization, deployment, and ninety days following demobilization. Second, how many Reservists are currently deployed, but will not re-enlist following demobilization? The only indicator of such disenchantment is a survey commissioned by DoD of 40,000 Reservists (all Services) in Iraq in July 2003. David Chu, Defense Under Secretary for Personnel, explained the results of the survey to the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives on November 5, 2003. Referring to the survey data, he explained that 66% of the 40,000 Reservists in Iraq had intentions of re-enlisting.³³ Acting Secretary of the Army, Les Brown, informed the Senate Armed Services Committee in November 2003 that the statistics for 2003 provided no indication of problems in retaining soldiers in the Army Reserve Component but he indicated it still may be too early to realize the effects.³⁴ Senator McCain, Republican from Arizona, countered, “They’re not ready to stay in at this kind of deployment schedule, [they] might as well be in the Regular Army.”³⁵ Third, the GWOT continues with no end in the near term. As a result, meeting endstrength in 2003 provides no guarantees for 2004 or 2005.

However, the initial indication is that men and women will continue to enlist and Reservists' will continue to re-enlist during this large scale execution of the Abrams Doctrine in the GWOT. Thus, the Army is not abusing the Abrams Doctrine, and recruiting and retention goals continue to be met.

Overall, the current status of the Reserve of the Army is positive. On the other hand, DoD and the Army cannot afford to "bask in the sun" of initial good news. Fortunately, the Secretary of Defense has identified several challenges related to issues identified with employers, family, and the Reserve Soldiers themselves. Given the feverish pace of mobilization, DoD and the Army must work quickly to identify anticipated fixes and viable alternatives to achieve a healthy Army Reserve Component for the Twenty-Second Century.

2004 AND BEYOND: THE FUTURE APPLICATION OF THE ABRAMS DOCTRINE

Reserves and Guardsmen were called up three or four months before they were needed, to find out they were not needed, and many were given only five days' notice, rather than the goal of thirty days, which really isn't fair to them. And it's not fair to their families or their employers. And that's not right. ... We need to fix it, and we're in the process of getting it fixed.³⁶

—Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense, 2003

As the Secretary admitted, there are several problems that must be corrected in order to execute large scale mobilizations. This is especially significant to maintain the Reserve of the Army as a healthy and key player on the Total Army Team. The information cited in the paragraphs above, to this point in the GWOT, showed that the Abrams Doctrine has not been abused. Yet, all must acknowledge, there exists a sensitive relationship among the Reserve Unit, Citizen Soldier, their families, and their employers. Accordingly, this researcher's purpose in the following paragraphs is to suggest recommendations for the future to avoid reaching a point of "diminishing return" in the investment in these Reservists.

MOBILIZATIONS MUST BE MORE EFFICIENT AND BETTER COMMUNICATED

Technology must be maximized so that the mobilization process is organized and efficient in order to deliver the Reserve Soldier to the Combatant Commander without delay while providing notification and predictability for the family and employer. An example of capitalizing on technology is the Reserve Component Automation System (RCAS). One critical asset of this system is the ability to query mobilization data. Maureen Lischke, Chief Information Officer for National Guard Bureau, explained that a recent test of RCAS dramatically increased the speed

and efficiency of unit mobilizations and with further improvements could reduce mobilization processing time by sixty percent.³⁷

Is RCAS the answer? This researcher is unsure, but there is the potential to leverage “state of the art” technology during peace-time so that the RC can be mobilized correctly and efficiently. Sincere consideration must be given to the importance of investing at least a portion of DoD dollars in technology and networking in order to execute timely mobilizations. All agree that the United States is without a peer in regard to weaponry, but is the technology to get the Reserve Soldier to the “fight” the best the Twenty-First Century technology has to offer? The answer is clearly “No!” Much effort, time, and a portion of the DoD’s budget must be dedicated to this aspect of future mobilizations.

Equally important is the timely communication of accurate and organized information from DoD/Army to the Reserve Soldier, family, and employer. This information is crucial and has direct impact on decisions in the workplace and home. Accurate and timely information must be conveyed in professionally executed “alert notices” that advise the Soldier, family, and employer of the possibility for near-term mobilization. This alert notification must be complete and professionally written with the audience (soldier, family, and employer) in mind. The subsequent “mobilization order” must articulate the situation, benefits, requirements, and likely duration of the mobilization. Again, this mobilization document must be plainly written for the understanding of the spouse and first line supervisor at the work place, not for the military bureaucratic system with endless acronyms and organizations. A team building attitude must be communicated to the Soldier, family, and employer both in peace-time and mobilization. Most importantly, this inclusive attitude must be supported with professionally executed communication and a genuine concern in actions.

EMPLOYERS MUST BE COMPENSATED FOR HIRING RESERVISTS

The Nation should assume that employers, although dedicated Americans, must consistently maintain a profit in order to stay active in their respective business. With the continued reliance and current trend of utilization of Reserve Forces, the time has come for the political leadership to advocate a form of tax credit for those employers that hire members of the RC. This tax credit would provide a direct compensation from the U.S. Government for employers in order to offset the cost of temporary employees, additional training and increased workload in the absence of mobilized employees. No one questions the loyalty and dedication of American employers, but this tax credit could significantly offset the cost of this loyalty and dedication while most importantly decreasing resentment between the Reserve Soldier

(employee), employer, and the Federal Government. This is a delicate balance, but one that is crucial to national security. As a result, this tax credit for employers can be considered to be an investment in the defense of the Nation.

A ROTATIONAL SYSTEM MUST BE ESTABLISHED FOR PREDICTABILITY

An assurance of predictability must be established for the Reserve Component Soldiers, employers, and families. No Guard or Reserve Soldier should be mobilized involuntarily for more than two years in a six year time-frame. A rotational system should be developed so that during a specific time frame, specific Guard/Reserve units would have priority for mobilization. Examples of a rotational system already exist across the United States Military; and should be adapted to build the Army Reserve Component Rotational Model. These include "Air and Space Expeditionary Force rotations" and "division/brigade rotations" for the Balkans. When units are not on the priority list for mobilization, units should focus on Officer/Non Commissioned Officer Education and continued individual/collective soldier skills qualification. Granted, this rotational system may not work for all units, but it could easily incorporate the Guard/Reserve battalions, brigades, and divisions.

RESERVE COMPONENT MUST FOCUS ON "HIGH RISK" SOLDIERS

DoD and the Army must now sincerely examine the relationship between recruiting and retention on the one hand and mobilization on the other. It is no longer a question, "if the Reserve Component Soldier will be mobilized, but when." Indeed, the increasing likelihood of mobilization could well contribute to a decrease in recruiting and retention. In addition, the Army Reserve Component must realistically review the current personnel to identify Soldiers who are a higher risk than normal in regard to mobilization. Again, this will impact retention. However, if the Soldier cannot mobilize due to family or employment issue, the challenge must be confronted and corrected or the Reserve Soldier must be discharged. Although such dismissals are rather harsh and unpleasant, these problems typically do not improve with time. Subsequently, at the point of mobilization, the Soldier cannot be activated, and all involved are intensely disappointed with the situation. Worst of all, another RC Soldier does not reach the Combatant Commander.

SUMMARY

The Army Reserve Component System has a critical role in national security. The intent is to provide trained and ready Reserve Soldiers/Units to the Civilian Authority and Combatant Commander in order to achieve required objectives. For this reason, the Nation maintains a

professional and efficient Reserve Force. This is why a sincere analysis and improvements must be periodically made in regard to the Abrams Doctrine and the overall mobilization process of the Reserve of the Army. As of now, collectively, there is not a significant overall negative effect on recruiting, retention, family, or employer. Research shows that the Citizen Soldier Concept is unique and fragile, requiring special care, attention and nurturing. This Nation's Army Reserve Component Force has no peer in the World, and this Nation must ensure this Force is maintained and not abused.

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² Lewis Sorley, "Creighton Abrams and Active-Reserve Integration in Warfare," *Parameters* (Summer 1991): 37.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 38.

⁵ Ibid., 39.

⁶ Abrams.

⁷ Frank T. Mildren, interview by LTC Glick and LTC Lightner, *U.S. Army Oral History Program*, U.S. Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks PA, U.S. Army War College, 24 February 1976, 29.

⁸ Dewitt C. Smith, interview by LTC Bradshaw and LTC Sweet, *U.S. Army Oral History Program*, U.S. Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks PA, U.S. Army War College, 17 April 1975, 16.

⁹ John W. Vessey, Jr., quoted by Lewis Sorley, *Thunderbolt: General Creighton Abrams and the Army of His Times*, (New York, N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 364.

¹⁰ Donn A. Starry, interviewed by COL Bergen, LTC Collison, LTC Burleson, *U.S. Army Oral History Program*, U.S. Military Institute, Carlisle Barracks PA, U.S. Army War College, 14 December 1976, 1.

¹¹ Abrams, 10.

¹² Lewis Sorley, *Thunderbolt: General Creighton Abrams and the Army of His Times* (New York, N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 363-365.

¹³ Vessey, quoted by Lewis Sorley, 364.

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¹⁵ Thomas F. Hall, *Statement before the Personnel Subcommittee*, Senate Committee on Armed Services in connection with Reserve Component issues. (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, March 19, 2003), 7.

¹⁶ David Moniz, "Guard, Reserves to be 37% of U.S. Force in Iraq '04," *USA Today*, 7 November 2003, sec., p.8.

¹⁷ United States Department of Defense, Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, Washington, D.C., point of contact: Mr Dan Kohner.

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²⁰ Paul Wolfowitz, *Remarks by Deputy Secretary of Defense*, Speech to the National Guard and Reserve Caucus Breakfast. (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, November 8, 2002), 3.

²¹ United States Department of Defense, *News Release*, "Results of Reserve Employer Study Compiled." (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 1 September 2002), 1.

²² *Ibid.*, 2.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁵ United States Department of Defense, *Status of Forces Survey*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, May 2003).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ United States Department of Defense, "Results of Reserve Employer Study Compiled." 2.

²⁸ James L. Scott II, *Statement of the Director for Individual and Family Policy*, presented to the Personnel Subcommittee of the Armed Services (Washington, D.C.: Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense For Reserve Affairs, Manpower and Personnel, 2003), 2.

²⁹ United States Department of Defense, *2002 Survey of Spouses of Activated National Guard and Reserve Component Members*, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, 2002).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Executive Summary, 3.

³¹ *Ibid.*, Executive Summary, 2.

³² H. Steven Blum; quoted by Bob Haskell, "National Guard Meets Its Recruiting and Retention Goals," *On Guard, Newspaper of the Army and Air National Guard*, 6 November 2003.

³³ David Chu; quoted by Rick Sisk, "Half of Troops Say Re-Up Is Out," *New York Daily News*, 6 November 2003.

³⁴ Les Brownlee; quoted by Eric Schmitt and Tom Shanker, "Reserve and Guard Ordered to Alert More Troops For Iraq," *New York Times*, 20 November 2003.

³⁵ John McCain; quoted by Eric Schmitt and Tom Shanker, "Reserve and Guard Ordered to Alert More Troops For Iraq," *New York Times*, 20 November 2003.

³⁶ Donald Rumsfeld; quoted by James O. Kievit and Thomas P. Murray, "Citizen-Soldiers in a 21st Century Army At War," *Center for Strategic Leadership Issue Paper*, Carlisle Barracks, PA, U.S. Army War College, October 2003, 1.

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